

How to Start a Blog Course

Start a Blog

Have you ever asked yourself how to start a blog? You may have been hearing that starting a blog is so complicated but we're here to convince you that creating a successful blog is not as daunting as many people think. In fact, by following the **step-by-step** instructions in this guide, you will be able to set up and make your own blog, avoiding pitfalls and missteps that hinder some novices (**no technical skills needed**). Ready? Let's get to it.

Five easy steps to starting a blog

- Choose a blogging platform
- Pick a domain name
- Get a web hosting account
- Install blogging software and set up a blog
- Select a blog design and layout

Choose a blogging platform

At this stage, you'll need to determine the type of blog management platform/tool you want to use. We recommend that you set up your blog on one of the self-hosted platforms. But before you make the decision, let us describe each option.

When it comes to starting your blog you have the following options: free, freemium and self-hosted (recommended) platforms.

Free platforms

For many new bloggers, the availability of free blogging platforms such as Blogger or Tumblr is tempting. Of course, there is one big benefit, it's free. But you need to understand that having a blog name in this form — yourname.blogspot.com or yourname.tumblr.com, is the sign of an inexperienced beginner who likely won't be taken seriously. By keeping your blog on a free platform, you let the platform own your name. You'll be subject to their rules and restrictions, they may limit or prohibit ads on your blog, or they may even place their own ads on your blog.

Freemium platforms

Freemium means you'll have a trial period before you have to start paying (costs vary from \$5 to \$30 per month). Several platforms are available. One of the most popular is TypePad. This platform focuses on ease of use for writing, but **customization options are limited** and it lacks certain features of value to bloggers.

By default, your TypePad blog name will look like this: yourname.typepad.com. It's not always the best option if you're trying to build the name and brand for your blog. However you could point your own domain (purchased through any domain registrar) to a TypePad blog.

Self-hosted platforms

Self-hosted platforms allow you to run a blog on your own domain. Aside from following your domain registrar and web hosting company's rules, you're fully in charge of your blog and its contents.

You have number of choices when it comes to a self-hosted blog system (also called Content Management System or CMS). The most popular is Wordpress.org.

This blog option is called self-hosted because you will use your own web hosting space and name for your blog. It normally costs \$4 to \$8 per month for the web space (hosting account), depending on the company you choose, and \$12 to \$15 per year for the name (domain). The actual CMS is usually open-source and free.

Although we mentioned some free blog-hosting options, the best course of action is to own your blog, especially if you will be using your own copyrighted material (articles, drawings, photos, etc.). Pay a small amount of money every month, about the same as a Starbucks coffee, and you will build your own equity. If you plan to sell products, services, music or anything else via your blog, then paid hosting is the best way to go. Many hosting providers can help you maintain an ecommerce blog.

To get your new self-hosted blog started, you need to decide on two important things: a domain name and a web hosting provider.

Pick a domain name

Your domain name will be the name by which you will be known online, no matter what niche you choose. It's the unique address of your blog on the Internet. Your domain will be yours as long as you continue paying the annual fee (\$10 to \$15 for a .com domain).

Users who know your domain/URL (uniform resource locator) can simply type it into their browser's address bar. Others will be able to discover your blog through search engines such as Google and Bing, so you definitely need to find a unique moniker.

Your domain name may be the highly popular "dot com" or it may be country or niche specific. From .us (United States) to .co.uk (United Kingdom) and from .guru (yes, for life coaches) to .sport (for sports related domains), these top level domains (TLDs) are added to any domain name in order to point to their location. The general rule is to go for a "dot com" domain, but some of the other extensions can work. For example "dot net" or "dot me."

In the end, it's about being memorable, so if a different extension or country code helps you be memorable, then break the rules.

Gets a web hosting account

After choosing a domain name, selecting reliable hosting services will be one of the most important decisions you make. To a great extent, the functionality and performance of your blog will depend on your hosting provider. The host makes sure your blog is available 24/7 to potential readers and it's where your files are stored online.

Most hosting companies also offer domain registration services. Some people keep their domain name with the registrar company, separate from the hosting account. We recommend keeping it all under your hosting account for hassle-free management and maintenance.

The wrong web host can cause many problems with your blog. Just imagine choosing a mobile company that has no reception.

Your web host is a major piece of the puzzle to maintaining a successful blog, therefore, it's crucial that you choose a reliable provider.

If you are choosing Google blogger or Tumblr, there is free hosting and you don't need get support from any web hosting provider. But if you choose Wordpress you have to get a hosting package for your blog.

Select a blog design and layout

Your blog needs is a face (design and layout). The design of your blog can be easily changed with the Themes. You could select a theme that is more unique to your blog and compatible with your niche. Choose a theme that looks great, but also works for your unique content needs. Your readers will first notice the overall appearance of the blog, before even taking a look at the content.

Once you install a theme you like, don't be surprised if it doesn't look quite right. Your theme is just a skeleton of your blog. To make it appealing, you'll have to fill in content (text, photos, videos, etc.).

How to Write and Create Great Blog Content

In this guide, we will cover what the content your blog consists of, types of content you can create and blogging practices you should follow. Without great content, even the most well-designed, tightly-structured blogs will ultimately fail. There are three types of content you need to create for your blog.

Pages content - Static page content, such as "About" and "Contact."

Sidebar content - Static content that appears on the sidebar of your blog.

Blog posts content - Regular posts about your niche. Before you start writing your day-to-day "Blog posts" you will want to make sure the static "Pages" and "Sidebar" content of your blog is created and uploaded to your blog. Let's explore each of these content areas.

Pages content

First, you will need to create static content pages for the following types of information.

About page

The most traditional page on any blog is the About page. This page simply tells new visitors to your blog what it is about, who you are and why you have a blog about your specific topic. Depending on your niche and your style, the information you provide can be "all business" or personal and fun.

Contact page

This page allows visitors to your blog to contact you at anytime. It can be a simple page with your email address plus social network links, or you can use plug-in like Contact Form or Newsletter to have a simple contact form visitors can use to contact you without leaving your website.

Products/services

If you created your blog to promote your business, you'll want to make sure there's a page that details the products or services you sell. Alternatively, if you already have a website for your business, you can provide a link to it in your menu.

Disclaimer/policy

To give yourself a little liability protection, you might want to consider a disclaimer or policy page. For example, if you are writing a health blog, but you're not a medical professional, you may want to create a disclaimer to say that you are not a physician or other healthcare professional and recommend that readers see their doctors for their personal medical information and evaluation.

You may also want to inform visitors to your website that you use analytics tracking, Google AdSense, affiliate marketing links and other types of content. A great example of a disclaimer page can be found [here](#).

As you continue to grow your blog, you will also want to consider adding the following pages.

Archives

This page simply guides people to your most recent posts, main categories, top tags and content you have created that's not located on your blog, such as guest posts, interviews, podcasts and videos.

Advertising page

If you want to sell advertising on your blog and you have enough traffic to make it worthwhile for advertisers, create an advertising page that shows off your latest stats (number of website visitors, pageviews, email subscribers, RSS subscribers, etc.). Be sure to visit other blogs in your niche—preferably larger ones—to see what pages they provide links for in their main navigation bar, sidebar and footer. Chances are, your visitors will be looking for the same types of pages on your blog.

Sidebar content

Your sidebar is the smaller column to the left or right (depending on the theme you selected) of your blog's main content. You will want to add the following content in sidebar widgets for your visitors.

Subscribe

Encourage visitors to your blog to subscribe via email or RSS. Email of course is best, especially if you would like to monetize your blog in the future. MailChimp, Sendplus are great services to use as they are free for the 2,000 subscribers.

About

This is a simple sentence or two about you and your blog for new visitors who may not take the time to read your About page. Having your photo in this blurb of text helps visitors put a face to the blog, whether you are the owner and editor managing other writers, or the main content author.

Follow

Beneath your about widget, you will want to display links to your social profiles so people can follow you. Generally, this will be your Facebook page, Twitter profile, Youtube channel, etc. You can use icons to

represent each network, or use official boxes, buttons, and badges from these networks. The latter help you build your social media audience by allowing people to connect with you without leaving your website.

Popular posts

A popular posts widget will help direct visitors to your top pieces of content. WordPress Popular Posts plugin will help you create this easily, displaying posts based on comments and view count.

Advertisers

If you plan to add advertising banners to your blog, then add them from the start so regular visitors will not be surprised when you do start gaining advertisers. The banners you use until then can link to products for which you are an affiliate marketer or to products you simply like.

Blog posts content

Before we get into the technical elements of blog posts, there is one fundamental that every blogger in every niche needs to adhere to.

Create content with readers in mind

You'll read a lot about optimizing your content for search engines, and while that it is important, if you don't optimize your content for humans, then you'll never gain the exposure that it takes to ultimately get links and rank well in search engines. If you write content that people love to read, then you will get traffic, social shares and links as your readership grows.

Basic components of a blog post

Following are the basic elements of a great blog post. We'll talk about how to optimize each for both readers and search engines.

Headline

The headline, or title, of your blog post must be crafted to capture the attention of potential readers who may see it in their social media newsfeeds or in search results. Make sure you've found a great keyword phrase that people searching will use to find blog posts on your topic — and include it in your headline.

Introduction

The first paragraph of your blog post will either keep people reading or make people leave. Make sure that it compels people to read the rest of your content. You should use your targeted keyword phrase for search at least once in this paragraph.

Main content

This is the main portion of your blog post content. Think of the headline as the promise and the main content as the fulfillment of that promise. Your main content should fully satisfy anyone who visits your post based on the headline. If you create content that does not satisfy the promises of your headline, people will start to identify your blog as unfulfilling and thus, stop visiting. The length of your blog posts can range from 300 to 3,000 or more words. It's best to alternate the length of your posts as you gain insight about what works best for your audience.

Sub-headlines

Many people will scan your blog content as opposed to reading it word for word. Write subheads that break your content into digestible sections, and make sure those subheads represent the content within them.

Bolded text - Use bold text in a few areas of your main content to help highlight important points. Use it selectively, otherwise your entire article will seem bolded, thus taking away the ability to highlight key portions of content.

Bulleted/numbered lists - While you don't want your entire post to be bulleted or numbered lists, these lists do help separate out steps and lists with useful content.

Media - Supplement the text portion of your content with media, such as relevant images and video. This will help break up your content and illustrate your points better. Images can also be used as part of the search optimization of your post—include your post's main keyword phrase in the filename of the image as well as the ALT tag.

Conclusion

The conclusion should be a paragraph or two at the end of your post to summarize what the reader should have gotten out of it. If they didn't, chances are, they will go back to see what they might have missed.

The last line of your blog post should be some form of a call to action. It can be as simple as asking readers to share their thoughts in the comments or to share the post on social media if they enjoyed it. If your post was written to promote a particular product or service, the call to action should encourage the reader to learn more about it.

You don't have to include all of the elements from this list in every post, but make sure you always have engaging introduction, quality content, and a solid conclusion.

Types of content

Videos - If you want to gain new visitors from YouTube, or simply feel it's easier to record a video than write a blog post, then video content should be in your plans. All you need is an HD camera (if you want to be on video), a microphone and/or a good screen capture program like Screenflow if you want to record tutorials from your computer. You can also create videos from webinars, Google+ hangouts and other platforms.

Presentations - Enjoy creating PowerPoint presentations, Google slides or Prezis? Then create slideshow content that you can use on sites like Slideshare or to supplement your blog content.

Whitepapers & Case Studies - If you prefer to write in-depth, researched content, then consider whitepapers and case studies. These can be summarized on a blog post, then offered as a free download to build your email list or in exchange for social shares.

Podcasts - If you like to speak or interview others, then podcasts should be part of your content. They allow you to gain new readers from those who love podcasts, and you can transcribe or summarize your podcasts in blog posts.

Infographics - For those with design talent, infographics can be a great way to get more exposure for your ideas. With precision design and backed-up facts, you can get your content featured on sites like Mashable and others that regularly post infographics.

Ebooks - Ebooks are also great freebies for building your email list or, alternatively, something you can sell on your website and Amazon Kindle. You can create them from scratch or repackage several blog posts that cover a specific theme.

The best part about these types of content is that you don't have to create unique content if you want to explore different formats. For example, you can take a blog post tutorial and record it as a video. You can take a podcast transcription and turn it into a blog post. You can take several blog posts and combine them into an ebook. The possibilities are endless.

Best blogging practices

To become a successful blogger in any niche, you will want to follow these best practices.

Set your blogging goals

You'll never know if you are getting the most out of blogging if you haven't set goals for your blog. Is your goal to make money? Get a new job? Find people to connect with about a specific topic? Define your blogging goals and periodically ask yourself if your blog is helping you meet them. If not, ask yourself how you can improve your blog in order to meet the goals.

Commit to becoming an expert

No matter what your blogging goals are, if you strive to be an expert in your niche, the fulfillment of your goals is sure to follow. People who are known as experts in their niche tend to receive more recognition and income for their content. They also tend to have larger audiences and the option to turn their readers into customers by offering related products and services.

Engage with your audience

The best way to stay in tune with your readers is to engage with them. Some ways to do this include replying to comments, responding to queries from your contact form, joining in conversations with readers on social networks, and visiting your readers' blogs to see what they are interested in and join discussions. As you do this, you will build stronger relationships with your readers and learn more about what they want, something that can help inspire your future content. The best way to stay in tune with your readers is to engage with them. Some ways to do this include replying to comments, responding to queries from your contact form, joining in conversations with readers on social networks, and visiting your readers' blogs to see what they are interested in and join discussions. As you do this, you will build stronger relationships with your readers and learn more about what they want, something that can help inspire your future content.

Be consistent and realistic

Creating a consistent schedule of posting on your blog helps your readers know when they can expect to hear from you again, whether it's daily, weekly, monthly or even quarterly. The key to maintaining consistency is to be realistic. Individual bloggers will find it difficult to create high-quality content on a daily basis. Start with weekly or bi-weekly posts and work your way up to daily posts, if that is your ultimate goal. Just don't sacrifice quantity for quality.

Use an editorial calendar

To help maintain your consistency, be sure to use some form of editorial calendar. You can use Google Calendar, Outlook Calendar, or even a simple spreadsheet. Use it to manage your ideas and plan your content

themes for each month so that blogging is something you focus on, not something you do in your spare time, quantity for quality.

Edit your work, or hire an editor

For many people, it's hard to create content, then proofread and edit it. As a matter of fact, editing while you write can hinder your creative flow. Proofreading is not optional. A blog post full of misspelled words and typos reflects poorly on you. If you're not able to do these tasks on your own, consider hiring a virtual assistant to do it for you. This is especially important if you're not writing in your native language. Having a native speaker of the language used in your blog edit your work can boost your credibility. While blog content does not need to be perfect, it does need to be easy to read and consume.

Analyze the data

Be sure to install Google Analytics when you begin blogging and regularly check your data. In particular, you want to make sure your traffic is growing and see what websites, social networks and other types of sources drive the most visitors to your blog. You'll also want to watch for significant drops in traffic, as these drops may indicate a bigger problem, such as downtime for your website or loss of traffic due to Google algorithm changes.

How to Promote Your Blog and Its Content

Learn online marketing strategies to help you market your blog as a whole, as well as each piece of content you create. This is called content marketing. Your content marketing skills will determine how much traffic comes to your website, how many social shares you receive, how many comments are made on your posts and how many subscribers you gain.

Ultimately, the goal is to have as many visitors as possible when you start to monetize your blog. Visitors who you can convert into advertising clicks, affiliate referrals and product/service buyers, depending on your monetization strategy.

Preparing for promotion

Before you start promoting your blog, you will want to make sure it's ready. This step is checking everything you have done from your start, from setting up your blog to creating your pages and posts.

- Check if your core content is live and ready for promotion.
- Test your menu bar and sidebar links to make sure pages, posts and archives open properly.
- Test your blog on the top browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Internet Explorer) and see if everything looks right.
- Check your contact info and test your contact form to see that it works well. Test your blog comment form to make sure people can easily leave comments.
- Test your social sharing buttons so people can share your posts on the top social networks.
- Test your social sharing buttons to make sure people can share your posts on the top social networks.
- Give your visitors one or more ways to connect with you and subscribe to your blog including an option to subscribe by email.

- Setup Google Analytics to track your visitors, where they come from and top content pages on your website.

Promotion goals

At the start, you will have three main goals for promoting your blog.

- You need to get the word out about your new blog so that those interested in your niche can find your blog, consume your content and spread the word.
- Focus on becoming an authority and gaining trust from your readers and from other influencers within your niche. Build relationships with top bloggers in complementary topic areas and strive to enhance your name and credibility.
- Engagement with your niche market happens every time anyone mentions your blog. When people start discussing your content, be sure to join into the discussion wherever it may be, including on your blog, social networks, forums, etc.
- Think of these goals in everything you do while promoting your blog. Your goals are to get exposure for the blog, establish yourself as an authority and engage with your niche audience.

Ways to promote your blog

There are many ways to promote your blog on the Internet.

Let your connections know about your new blog

Everyone who comes in contact with you should know that you have a blog. Some good ways to ensure this include the following.

- Add your blog URL to your email signature so your email contacts can check it out. WiseStamp is a great app to try for anyone using Gmail or other browser-based email systems. It will even pull in your latest blog post into your signature.
- Add your blog URL to the social profiles you use the most including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, and so on. This way, whenever people find you on social media, they can discover your blog as well.
- Add your blog URL to forum profiles and signatures where you participate in discussions, preferably related to your new blog's niche.
- Add your blog URL to author bios of any sites you are already contributing to, including other blogs that you own. Maybe you already have a blog about photography and you are starting a blog about marketing. Your author bio and about page should link up to your new marketing blog.

Network with others at every opportunity

Attend networking events? Be sure to have a quick elevator pitch about your blog when they ask you what you do. If you're at a blogging conference in particular, it's highly acceptable to let people know that you founded yourdomain.com, a blog that helps people learn more about your subject matter. Even if you have a day job that you need to promote, your elevator pitch would be that you are a [your job title], and you also run yourdomain.com, a blog that helps people learn more about your subject matter.

Submit your blog to search engines

We suggest to use a plugin called Yoast SEO. One of the features of this plugin allows you to create a custom sitemap for your blog. You can use this sitemap to submit your blog to search engines through Google Webmaster Tools (for Google) and Bing Webmaster Tools (for Bing and Yahoo).

Submit your blog to directories

While there are hundreds of directories that will list your blog for a specific yearly or permanent fee listing, only a handful should be considered in terms of quality. These include Best of the Web Blogs (\$150 for submission), and EatonWeb Blog Directory (\$35 for submission). Some of these directories offer free listings as well, but you will be waiting a very, very long time to see yours get added, assuming they add it at all.

Comment on other blogs

Commenting on other relevant blogs is a great way to build relationships with top bloggers within your niche. Research the web to find top blogs in your niche and start commenting on their newest posts. This will help you make them and their readers aware of your existence as well as developing your own authority within the niche.

Contribute to other blogs in your niche

Matt Cutts, Google's head of webspam, has denounced guest blogging as a tactic for SEO. With that said, it's still a great way to get exposure within your niche so long as you are submitting quality content to quality blogs. Find blogs that have lots of social shares and community engagement as judged by the number of comments per post and social followers. Get to know the blog owners and/or editors, establish a relationship with them, and then approach them to see if they are accepting new contributors on their website.

The key is to say new contributors as opposed to guest bloggers - "contributors" tells the blog owner/editor that you are committed to creating high quality content for them as opposed to just slapping something together to promote yourself.

Create a Feedburner account

Feedburner is a service owned by Google that allows you to track the number of subscribers to your RSS feed. Use it to offer your blog visitors a way to subscribe to your blog in their favorite RSS reader such as Feedly.

Optimize your blog for search

Regularly creating valuable content on your blog is one way to get search engines to index your content. If you want blog and your posts to rank for particular keywords, you will want to always strive to optimize both for search. This can be as simple as using the fields provided by Yoast SEO to add a keyword optimized SEO title and meta description to your blog's homepage, main static pages, and each one of your posts.

To stay on Google's good side, avoid overstuffing your blog with keywords. Choose one keyword phrase to optimize for on each page and post. Include it in your SEO title, meta description, and one image on the page.

Start building your mailing list

Don't wait until you start getting a substantial amount of traffic to build a mailing list — start from the very beginning. If on your first day of launching your blog you get two people who love it, you want those two people to be able to give you their email address so you can keep them up to date with what is happening on your blog. Later, this list will be what you use to promote your monetization strategy.

Operating a mailing list is generally not expensive in the beginning. Services like MailChimp allow you to have up to 2,000 subscribers with up to 12,000 emails for free, while services like Aweber allow you to have up to 500 subscribers with unlimited emails for \$19 per month.

Look at what your competitors are doing

You don't have to reinvent the wheel when it comes to promoting your blog. Just look at what your competitors are doing in terms of marketing strategy. You can use SEO backlink tools to show you the links your competitors are getting which will shed light into their strategies in regards to social networks, directories, guest posting opportunities, and other online marketing tactics. CognitiveSEO has a free Backlink Explorer you can use for this purpose.

Look at paid advertising options

If you have a budget, you can boost your initial traffic through paid advertising. Google AdWords allows you to pay to promote your blog on Google Search and their display networks. Social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and StumbleUpon have their own advertising platforms to help you drive traffic to your blog and blog posts. You can also look at advertising options on other blogs in your niche that receive a lot of traffic. This will generally be in the form of banner advertisements or sponsored reviews.

Ways to promote your blog content

In addition to promoting your blog as a whole, you will also want to promote your blog content, i.e., each, individual blog post. As you promote your content, your blog as a whole will gain more traffic, social shares, and engagement. Here are some ways to promote your content.

Submit your blog posts to bookmarking and voting sites

Similar to directories, there are hundreds of social bookmarking and voting sites. And similar to directories, not all of them are worthwhile. Your goal is to look for social bookmarking and voting sites that have engaged users. These include Delicious, Stumble- Upon, Reddit, BizSugar, Inbound, and similar. Note that many of these sites are not fond of people promoting their own content all of the time, so you may want to consider making a friend on those networks and occasionally sharing content with them in hopes that they will submit it to these networks.

Try blog promotion networks

Several networks exist solely for the purpose of gathering people who love to help each other promote their blog posts. These networks include Triberr, Social Buzz Club, Viral Content Bee, and similar. You can also build your own blog post promotional network as you network with others in your niche. Just have everyone connect in a Facebook group or in an email list where they can share their latest posts.

Using social media networks

There are social media possibilities, and new ones appear regularly. For most of us, though, one of the already-popular channels will serve our needs well and deliver maximum promotional benefit. Of course, your business is unique, and you should make use of the social media avenues that best fit your own niche and style. If there is a lesser-known channel where your audience tends to gather, you should be there with them. Whatever you do, don't overextend yourself. Everything you do online is a reflection of your capabilities, and your content marketing is a reflection of your content strategy.

Establish yourself on social media

By this point, you should have already claimed your preferred name on each social channel. Depending on your niche, certain social media channels can be invaluable. Never forget, though, that social media (aside from paid advertising) is a place to connect with others, be helpful to them and display your expertise. Don't hop in with a megaphone and act like a barker at a circus. Rather, treat social media like a huge cocktail party—a place where you can meet others, trade ideas and network to form alliances. Treat everyone you meet with respect. Your aim is to be of value and engage with your current or future blog readers.

The main social networks you should work towards building connections upon are listed below. Each social media platform should be utilized and approached differently. Choose the one (or ones) that best fit your needs and become an expert at leveraging them to help reach your goals.

Twitter - There are more than 200 million users on Twitter. Some say it is a one-way conversation, with 140-character (maximum) messages getting fired out constantly with a lot of people talking, but not a lot of people listening. Others have managed to build a strong, engaged following to promote their content towards.

LinkedIn - LinkedIn is the leading social network for professionals. With more than 100 million users, it's a great place to connect with other bloggers and business owners in your niche. The network has a lot to offer when it comes to business-related information for. The downside to this network is that unlike Twitter, you have to know a person already (or know their email address) to connect with them.

Pinterest

While it is still predominantly used by women, the number of men on Pinterest is increasing. With more than one hundred million active monthly users, the statistics on Pinterest are impressive.

Facebook

With over a billion active monthly users, Facebook is the number one social media network. Chances are, many of your potential readers and future customers already have an account there.

One thing to remember is that Facebook tends to be reserved for true "social" interaction. You can launch your blog's Facebook page and start interacting with the community that is already established, but be careful about mixing business with pleasure on this platform. Facebook rewards the engagement with your followers, thus the goal is not the quantity but quality of relevant posts and updates that engage your fans, which can be measured by the number of likes, comments, and shares you receive.

Also remember that Facebook is a great place to promote your posts. You can start by doing so using their paid advertising platform as you grow your own organic audience and reach.

YouTube

Now owned by Google, the videos you launch on YouTube can get indexed on the world's largest search engine quickly. Don't forget to apply search engine optimization (SEO) strategies on your YouTube channel and launches - most especially by optimizing your titles and video descriptions with a target keyword phrase.

It is not wise to host your videos on your own blog due to the size of video files will lag you down way too much. YouTube is an excellent help in this regard. You can host videos there for free, gain the SEO advantage, and then embed them on your own blog.

Instagram

This site allows you to share photographs via your mobile device. It is similar to Pinterest, in that you can create boards that focus on specific topics.

Here again, remember how important it is to stay centered. Make sure your photographs are what your audience wants to see. This is not to say you shouldn't post items of general interest, but your profile as a whole should draw your desired audience and provide value to them.

How to Make Money From Your Blog

Now we will learn how to prepare your blog for monetization and monetization strategies for blogs with small (new blogs), medium and large audiences.

If one of the driving factors for starting a blog was to make money online, then this is the guide you have been waiting for. For those who work full-time jobs, earning money from your blog is a great way to generate side income. For those who plan to dedicate themselves to the monetization strategies, it's possible to use it as regular source of income.

Passive income is the way to go so you can earn money while you sleep. This isn't entirely false, but it's not as simple as it sounds either. Bloggers who are well known for their passive income generation did not start their blog one day and earn piles of money in their sleep the next. Just like any other income source, passive income requires a good bit of hard work in the beginning to set up. But if you do it right (and we'll teach you how), you can start earning money, even while away from the computer.

Income reports are monthly blog posts written by bloggers who make money online, showing exactly how much they earned throughout the month and how they did it.

What you want to be on the lookout for are misleading income reports - those that show how much a blogger makes, but not how much they spend. Many bloggers invest a lot of money into their blog on a monthly basis in order to earn revenue, but some conveniently leave that fact out in their income reports, making it look like they are earning tons of free money.

Whenever you craft your own monetization plan, you will need to keep some expenses in mind. These include your web hosting, email marketing software, search and social media tools, mastermind memberships, online advertising, and similar costs.

You can only utilize certain monetization strategies with a budding audience, you shouldn't get your readers used to an advertisement-free blog, then spring into monetization mode as soon as you hit a certain number of visitors. This might surprise and put off your original readership.

By putting some monetization strategies in place at the very beginning, you will have the chance to earn a little money from the beginning while letting your audience know exactly what they are going to get. Sure, you can add or subtract monetization methods as an ongoing process to test which ones earn the most revenue, but don't feel like you have to wait to start.

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Preparing to monetize

Before you start monetizing, there's one basic thing you need to do to ensure your current and future monetization success: start building an email list.

Here's why it is so essential:

If you start to capture email addresses at the start of your blog, you will have the chance to retain your first visitors as lifelong readers. No one has to know there's only one subscriber on your mailing list so far if you don't tell them.

Before you have monetization strategies that need email promotion, you can use your email list to drive traffic to your blog by promoting your content.

- Your email list subscribers are yours. You can't save contact information about fans of your page or followers on your Twitter account. Your email list, on the other hand, is exportable. So if your email marketing provider decides to shut down, you take your list and move it elsewhere as opposed to lose it completely.
- Your email list subscribers have more of a chance to see your email messages than social media updates. Facebook reach is slim, as is other networks, since most people are following hundreds of other people and businesses. Getting in someone's inbox means that they will at least see your name on a regular basis, regardless of whether they open that email. And when they do open that email, you have their undivided attention.
- When you start utilizing monetization methods such as email list sponsorship, affiliate marketing, or selling your own products, you will have grown a loyal audience that is used to receiving and consuming your emails. This is much better than starting a list and selling to your subscribers right away.

Fortunately, email marketing does not have to cost an arm and a leg before you start generating revenue. Some email marketing tools allow you to have 2,500 subscribers and send unlimited emails per month to them for free like SendPlus. It's a great option for those who need to start a list, but don't have the budget until they start earning revenue.

Monetization strategies for new blogs

If you have a relatively new blog, or one that doesn't receive a lot of traffic, then the following are monetization strategies you can put into place to start the revenue generation process.

Affiliate marketing

Affiliate marketing allows you to generate income by promoting other people's products for a small commission. This is probably the easiest monetization method to get into at the start because you can apply to most programs with little to no audience.

Here are some examples:

- If you have a blog all about reviewing WordPress themes, then you should apply to affiliate programs for any WordPress theme you want to write about and promote. Visitors to your blog would likely be interested in WordPress themes, and therefore would be likely to buy a WordPress theme after clicking on a link to it from your site. Popular affiliate programs for WordPress themes include StudioPress, DIYthemes, and ElegantThemes.

- If you have a blog about gardening, then you should apply to affiliate programs for gardening books and products. Amazon Associates is a great affiliate program to join for any niche as they sell books and products related to just about everything.
- Another approach is to be an affiliate for anything you have paid for and use on your blog. So, if you use a StudioPress WordPress theme, MailChimp email marketing software, Hostgator hosting or any other product with an affiliate program, be sure to create a page on your blog with resources aimed at other bloggers in the niche. As your blog grows in popularity, other bloggers will want to follow in your footsteps and may sign up for the same services you use for their own blog, thus generating some revenue for you. To find other affiliate programs by doing a search for paid products and services use the search term + affiliate program.

You can also go to affiliate networks (sites that connect publishers like you and merchants who want publishers to promote their products) and look at the products they have available to promote. Networks like Shareasale, E-junkie and Clickbank allow you to preview programs before you join.

Following are best practices for promoting affiliate products

Write reviews about the product or service and include an affiliate link within your review post. Don't just regurgitate the information found on the product or service sales page, but write your experience with it inside and out. People can recognize a thorough, honest review from one that is done purely to generate revenue.

Create a resource page on your blog of the top products and services you recommend, including an affiliate link for each, plus a link to your in-depth review if applicable.

Get banners for the top products and services you know your audience will love and put them in your blog's header, sidebar, and at the end of posts. Affiliate product banners are also great placeholders for future advertising spots you may want to sell when you start getting a substantial amount of traffic.

Email your list whenever you write a great review or a particular affiliate program has a great special going on that your subscribers would be interested in.

Be prepared to do special promotions on your blog and email list around Black Friday and Cyber Monday - it's the hottest time to share affiliate product sales and earn some great income.

Important reminder: Whenever you promote an affiliate product, be sure to include a disclaimer in your review, at the top of your resource page or in your emails that you are an affiliate of the product. It's a good way to build trust with your audience and it's also required in certain countries like the United States.

Google AdSense

Once you have created some content for your blog, let's say 10 - 15 blog posts, you can apply for Google AdSense. Google AdSense allows publishers to generate income from advertisers who want to place ads on the Google Network. Once you sign up and get approved, you will be able to customize ad slots for links, banners, images, and video and place the Google AdSense code for each of these ad slots onto your website. After an hour or two, Google will begin to match the best ads to your website.

The key to Google AdSense is to follow the guidelines and know where to place your ads for the best results. You can experiment with ad placement in your blog's sidebar, below the title of individual blog posts, in your blog's header, and other areas. Google even offers some example site layouts that will help you get the most clicks for your ads.

One thing to keep in mind about Google AdSense - if you are making good money through affiliate marketing or selling your own products and services, the last thing you will want is to encourage someone to leave your website by clicking on an ad. Once you begin making good money through other monetization strategies, you may want to consider removing Google AdSense. It's better to get a \$20 sale than a \$0.05 click.

Monetization for blogs with small size audiences

Once you start building up a loyal readership and a good flow of traffic, you can start looking into additional monetization strategies such as the following.

Selling ads

Depending on your niche, you can generally start selling ad space directly to advertisers once you get a certain traffic volume. You can manually manage ads on your blog, or use platforms like BuySellAds that can help you sell and manage ads quickly through their platform with a snippet of code that goes on your website where you want particular ad sizes and types to be displayed. It's also a great platform to use in researching your traffic volume versus how much you can charge for ads.

Sponsored reviews

In addition to selling ad space, you can also offer sponsored reviews. This is where someone pays you to write about their product or service on your blog. If you choose only the products your audience will most likely be interested in, you can earn money while creating great content — a win-win situation. If you choose any product just because someone is paying you however, you could lose your hard-earned audience as they will not be interested in the content.

When you do sponsored reviews, you should always remember Google guidelines about using the rel=nofollow attribute for paid links, or links within a paid review. People will likely offer you more to have a dofollow link. Use your own discretion as to whether the price advertisers offer for a sponsored review is worth risking the wrath of Google.

In order to write a great sponsored review, insist that you want to use the product or service for a trial period to really get some insight into it. That way, you can write an honest, compelling review.

Monetization for blogs with large audiences

This is a monetization strategy that has the potential to generate continually increasing amounts of revenue based on your ability to drive more traffic to your blog. Be sure to create an advertising page on your blog and update your metrics (traffic, social audience, email list subscribers, etc.) regularly so you can continue to increase your ad pricing monthly.

Syndicating content

You've likely seen those blocks of links on sites like CNN, Time, and other media outlets that say "Around the Web" or "You Might Also Enjoy". These are generally created by code from content syndication networks such as Outbrain, Taboola, etc. many of which want you to have a large base of traffic before you are considered to apply as a publisher to their networks.

By including blocks of related content like this to your blog, you'll be earning revenue each time someone clicks on an article that looks interesting to them. It's a good situation for both the publisher and the reader – the

publisher (you the blogger) gets money for sharing related, valuable links. The reader gets the opportunity to explore new content, and will likely think of your blog as a great source of content to check out.

Selling your blog

It might sound a bit crazy, but if you have a blog that isn't directly tied into your own name, products, or services, and mostly depends on ad revenue, you may want to consider selling your blog later down the road. Some blogs have earned over \$1 million dollars in a sale thanks to how much traffic received, the quality of content they house, and the advertising dollars they rake in on a monthly basis. The more traffic, quality content, and advertising dollars you earn with your blog, the more you can sell it for later down the road if you so choose.

Best Blogging Tools and Resources

Blogging software

Self-hosted:

- WordPress.org (recommended)
- B2evolution.net (alternative)
- Concrete5.org (alternative)

Free tools:

- WordPress.com (yourblogname.wordpress.com)
- Blogger.com (yourblogname.blogspot.com)
- Tumblr.com (yourblogname.tumblr.com)

Freemium tools:

- TypePad.com (14 days free trail)
- SquareSpace.com (14 days free trail)

Domain research tools

Basic search:

- Pcnames.com — instant domain check engine
- Domize.com — domain name search engine
- Domainr.com — explore the entire domain name space

Advanced search/premium domains:

- DomainSearch — comprehensive searchable database of domain name registration
- WhoisLookup — discover the people or organizations behind a domain name
- DomainMarketplace — research available domains to buy

Additional name search:

- Trademark search — search the USPTO's database of registered trademarks
- KnowEm — check social profiles

Photo and image galleries

- Flickr — enables bloggers to find images with creative commons that allow commercial use
- Photo Pin — tool makes it very simple to search creative commons photos
- MorgueFile — free stock photos
- FreeImages — leading source of free stock photos

Logo design tools

Free:

- Squarespace logo — logo made easy.
- Logogarden — start with free amazing logo.
- LogoMaker — design a logo and use it on your site for free using their HTML code.

Paid:

- LogoYes — design a logo for free and download a high-resolution file for \$0.99
- LogoTypeMaker — design a logo for free and download a high-resolution version for \$25
- GraphicSpring — create professional looking logos \$39.99

Web design and development services

- oDesk — get more done with the help of the freelancer
- Elance — hire great freelancers
- Freelancer — work done easy with the freelancers
- Fiverr — graphics, marketing, fun, and more online services for \$5
- Dribbble — community of designers sharing screenshots of their work, process, and projects.
- Behance — discover the latest work from top online portfolios by creative professionals.
- DesignContest — 1000s of professional designers compete for your business
- 99Designs — get the design you will love from community of designers
- Ebookindiecovers — stylish eBook covers at affordable prices
- Custom Fan Page Designs — get your social media pages custom designed
- Codementor — connects you with experts for urgent issue solving, technical advice, and code review

Graphic & web design tools

- Canva — 100% free tool to create good graphics without designing skills.
- Picmonkey — free easy photo editing! Add filters, frames, text, and effects.
- Gimp.org — free software for photo retouching, image composition and image authoring.
- PiktoChart — infographic design app that helps to produce beautiful, high quality graphics (paid).
- Easel.ly — is a simple web tool that empowers anyone to create and share powerful visuals.
- Infogr.am — Create infographics and interactive online charts. It's free and super-easy!
- Google Charts — interactive charts and data tools that are powerful, simple to use, and free.
- MyeCoverMaker — Create your own 3D eBook cover online.
- QuickPictureTools — this site offers 12 simple and easy online image editing tools.
- Picfull — free online photo editing.
- Visme — create interactive online presentations, infographics, animations & banners in HTML5.

WordPress themes

Wpthemedetector — free tool to find all the details about the Word- Press theme used by a site.

Free:

- WordPress.org Themes — free WordPress themes directory.
- Topwpthemes — free quality and professional Wordpress themes.
- Fabthemes — fabulous WordPress themes available for free.
- Fthemes — amazing free WordPress themes site.

Paid:

- StudioPress — professionally designed premium WordPress themes.
- ElegantThemes — beautiful premium WordPress themes.
- Themefuse — premium WordPress themes and WordPress templates.
- Thesis Themes — the ultimate design and template manager for Word- Press.
- WooThemes — premium themes, plugins & ecommerce for WordPress.
- InkHive — premium WordPress themes.
- RichWP — responsive premium WordPress themes.
- ThemeForest — various WordPress themes and templates.
- Magazine3 — premium WordPress magazine themes.
- Themify — drag & drop WordPress themes.
- TeslaThemes — modern WordPress themes with clean design.
- MyThemeShop — premium WordPress themes and plugins.
- Press75 — premium WordPress themes.

Video and screen recording tools

- Camtasia — powerful, yet easy-to-use screen recorder and video editor
- Camstudio — record all screen and audio activity on your computer
- Jing — free and simple way to start sharing images and short videos of your computer screen
- Screenr — web-based screen recorder to create and share your screencast around the web
- ScreenFlow — screen recording and editing software for Mac
- FlixPress — create extraordinary videos online in minutes
- IntroMaker — make your own Video with your Logo
- VideoScribe — make your own whiteboard videos, fast

SEO tools

Topics and keywords research:

- Google Keyword Tool — plan your campaigns and learn what your customers are looking for.
- Google Trends — subscribe to get Trends email alerts for the topics you care about.
- Wordtracker — reveal high performing keywords in minutes (Paid).
- LongTail Pro — find profitable keywords faster (Paid).
- Market Samurai — discover the best keywords and your competitors weaknesses.
- UberSuggest — free keyword tool that makes good use of different suggest services.

- Hittail — long tail keyword tool, to help you increase your organic traffic (Paid). WebCEO Backlink
- Quality Check — this tool will help you improve your backlink profile in the post-Penguin era

Content marketing tools

- ScribeContent — content optimization software for online marketing and SEO.
- TrendSpottr — supercharge content marketing for brands and publishers.
- Contently — best solution for high-end brand publishing.
- Soolve — search suggestions and completions from the top providers on the internet.
- SlideShare — share what you know and love through presentations, infographics, documents.
- SocialCrowlytics — identify the influencers & your competitor's most shared content.
- ShareGrab — get the most shareable content from any Facebook page, whenever you need it.
- Clicktotweet — the easiest way to promote & advertise your stuff on Twitter.
- Triberr — community of bloggers come together to read and share great content.
- Dlvr.it — save time, share smarter, and engage your audience everywhere.

Copywriting and content tools

- The Golden Ratio Typography Calculator — discover the perfect typography for your site.
- Copyscape — search for copies of your page on the web.
- ZenWriter (PC) — only you and your thoughts.
- OneLook — dictionary search of words and phrases.
- Google Alerts — monitor the web for interesting new content.
- WordCounter — web-based word counter.
- Calibre — one stop solution for all your e-book needs.
- Scrivener — writing software for Mac and Windows.
- FreeMind — free mind mapping software.
- DivvyHQ — content planning and workflow tool.
- Diigo — is a multi-tool for knowledge management and better reading.
- Topic Generator — don't know what to blog about? This tool will help.
- HTML Cleaner — convert Word content to clean html code

Email marketing tools

- AWeber — email marketing services and software solutions for small business.
- MailChimp — the best way to design, send, and share email newsletters.
- MadMimi — simple way to send newsletters, grow your subscribers and manage your emails.
- CampaignMonitor — easy to attract subscribers and send them beautiful email newsletters.
- ConstantContact — suite of tools to help you reach, engage, and acquire new customers through email.
- GetResponse — email marketing software and autoresponder.
- Litmus — test and track your email campaigns, so you can put your best design forward.
- Vero — send emails based on what your customers do.
- Customer.io — send targeted human messages to your users, by utilizing their unique interactions with your business. Evercontact — keep your contacts always up-to-date.

Site analytics and optimization tools

- Google Analytics — web analytics and reporting.
- Clicktale — better digital customer experience better business.
- CrazyEgg — visualize where your visitors click.
- Unbounce — build, publish & A/B test landing pages without technical skills.
- HubSpot — inbound marketing software platform that helps companies attract visitors.
- Visual Website Optimizer — A/B Testing Software for Marketers.
- Optimizely — improve conversions through A/B testing, split testing and multivariate testing.
- Clicky — real time web analytics.
- KISSmetrics — customer intelligence and web analytics.
- Mint Analytics — a fresh look at your site with Mint web analytics application.
- MixPanel — advanced analytics platform in the world for mobile & web.
- BrokenLinkCheck — free tool to check for broken links.
- Pingdom — free website speed test tool.
- Google PageSpeed — check speed of your website on all devices.
- Browsershots — check how your browser works in all browsers.

Custom email sign up tools

- MailMunch — grow your email list.
- OptinMonster — get more email subscribers.
- Popup Domination — grow Your Email List Using the World's Leading Email Capture Software.
- OptinSkin — add opt-in forms and social share buttons to your posts in seconds.
- Hellobar — header bar to display your message.
- LeadPages — the easiest way to create mobile friendly landing pages.
- OptimizePress — is the new way to create high converting landing pages and sales pages.
- Sumo — free toolkit for growing your traffic.

Shopping cart and product distribution tools

- E-Junkie — shopping cart for selling downloads and tangible goods.
- ClickBank — leader in marketing of digital products.
- PayPal — powerful tools for your business

Social media and marketing tools

- wpMail — a free WordPress newsletter with a roundup of WordPress news and articles.
- Simply Measured — easy social media analytics and measurement.
- HootSuite — leading social media dashboard to manage and measure your social networks.
- BufferApp — buffer is the easiest way to publish on social media.
- FollowerWonk — twitter analytics: find, analyze, and optimize for social growth.
- PageLever — a Facebook analytics company.
- SproutSocial — social media management tool created to help businesses find new customers & grow their social media presence.
- Meshfire — social media management dashboard.

- BuddyMedia — run integrated campaigns across Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and your websites.
- ManageFlitter — critically acclaimed set of Twitter tools.
- Twitonomy — Twitter #analytics and much more.
- Tagboard — search any hashtags.
- Tweetchat — manage your tweet chats in real time.
- SocialBro — analyze, engage and monetize your Twitter audience.
- Bitly — link shortener tool.
- ViralTag — the best Pinterest management tool for brands.
- Tailwindapp — Pinterest analytics, management and listening.
- Agorapulse — complete toolbox for Facebook and Twitter.
- Shortstack — run contests and promotions from Facebook or anywhere.
- Likealyzer — analyze and monitor your Facebook pages.
- Booshaka — a new way to engage your audience.
- Social Mention — real-time social media search and analysis.
- NeedTagger — helps you find customers, generate leads and attract followers on Twitter.
- Commun.it — Twitter community management dashboard.
- ViralContentBee — social media sharing made easy.
- Nimble — simple solution to combine CRM systems with the social media.
- Crowdbooster — measures and optimizes your social media marketing.
- Social Crawlytics — widely used influencer & content marketing tool.
- Demographics Pro — Twitter audience analytics for marketing professionals.
- True Social Metrics — calculate and improve the economic impact of social media marketing on your business.
- Moz Analytics — software for managing inbound marketing and local SEO.
- Topsy — Twitter search, monitoring, & analytics.
- Sysomos — social media monitoring and analytics tools.
- RowFeeder — social media monitoring and analysis made easy.
- Buzzsumo — Identify the most shared links and key influencers for any topic.
- Oktopost — measure all of your social media marketing from one powerful platform.
- Storify — curate articles and opinions on any given topic or capture reactions to an event.
- InfusionSoft — complete sales and marketing automation software for small businesses.
- Intercom.io — shows you who is using your product and makes it easy to personally communicate with them through behavior-driven email and in-app messages.
- InboxQ — find people asking questions about things you know on Twitter

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